DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 423 722 FL 801 261

AUTHOR	Huerta-Macias, Ana
TITLE	Chapter 1 Regular Even Start Project. Independent Evaluation Report, 1994-1995.
INSTITUTION	Ysleta Independent School District, El Paso, TX.
SPONS AGENCY	Texas Education Agency, Austin.
PUB DATE	1995-00-00
NOTE	94p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; *Adult Education; Citizenship Education; Day Care; Early Childhood Education; *English (Second Language); *Family Literacy; *Family Programs; High School Equivalency Programs; Infants; Intergenerational Programs; *Limited English Speaking; *Literacy Education; Parenthood Education; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Toddlers
IDENTIFIERS	Even Start; *Ysleta Independent School District TX

ABSTRACT

The report presents an evaluation of the Ysleta Independent School District (Texas) state-funded Even Start Project, a comprehensive family literacy program consisting of adult education (basic skills, English as a second language, citizenship, transition to college), intergenerational literacy classes with preschool children, early childhood education through home visits, parenting classes, and infant and toddler care for participating families. The project is implemented at a government housing complex. The evaluation uses data collected through ethnographic methods (parent and staff interviews, site visits, participant observations, non-participant observations, journals) and conventional quantitative administrative data to investigate attainment of five specific program objectives from the perspectives of participant families, staff, and the community. Appended materials include interview questions (Spanish and English) and guidelines, a copy of the recruitment flyer, forms for recording specific family interest and planning instruction, a calendar, and the author's curriculum vitae. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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ED 423 722

CHAPTER 1 REGULAR EVEN START PROJECT

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION REPORT 1994 - 1995

PREPARED BY
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YSLETA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
EL PASO, TEXAS

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INTRODUCTION

The Ysleta Independent School District (YISD) Even Start Project is a Chapter 1 Even Start Program funded by the Texas Education Agency. The project was a response to the need for family literacy programs in the El Paso borderlands area where it is estimated that there are over 132,000 functionally illiterate adults (El Paso Times, 1995). The YISD Even Start was funded for a total of four years, subject to continuation of the grant on a yearly basis. The first year of implementation of the grant was 1993-1994. Because of unforeseen difficulties with its principal collaborator, the initiation of the project was delayed by several months. The activities for the first year consisted mostly of identifying another principal collaborator, hiring and training staff, obtaining and remodeling a facility, family recruitment and implementation of GED classes. This evaluation report focuses on the second year of implementation, 1994-1995.

Project Design

The YISD Even Start project is a comprehensive family literacy project. The project consists of the following components: 1) Adult Education (GED, ESL, citizenship, transition to college); 2) Intergenerational/PACT (Parent And Child Together) literacy classes with preschoolers; 3) Early Childhood Education through home visits; 4) Parenting Classes; and 5) Infant and Toddler Care.

Project Site

The project is being implemented at the Kennedy's, a government housing

complex in southeast El Paso. The center at the Kennedy's includes three classroom areas, a library area, two childcare rooms, two offices, a small kitchen, and restrooms. Children residing at the Kennedy's attend Capistrano Elementary School, which is less than half a mile from the Even Start site. Older children attend Ysleta Middle and Ysleta High Schools. Although there is great need for literacy services in many areas of El Paso, the Kennedy's was targeted for Even Start because 1) The residents are relatively young (many families have children 0-7); 2) The poverty rate is high (99% of the children at Capistrano Elementary are on free or reduced lunch); 3) There is great need for adult education (more than half of the population in that area of the city lacks a high school diploma); and 4) the families indicated an interest in the services offered through Even Start in a pre-program survey.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND PURPOSE

Family literacy programs, including the Ysleta Even Start program, are designed to address long-term changes in the lives of families. Because of this they generally provide a more complex set of services for adults and children than do programs which are only for general education or development. Even Start Family literacy programs are varied, rich and contain much depth. It is these same characteristics which provide a challenge for the evaluator, for traditional evaluation designs fall short of capturing the complexity of such programs. In her discussion of program evaluation for family literacy, Wrigley (1995) writes,

> "Standardized tests and evaluations that look at narrow indicators of success present only a partial (and in many cases untrue) picture of program success. What's more, they threaten to trivialize literacy work, fail to capture the richness of learning so evident to staff and learners, and miss many of the changes that occur in participants' lives." (p.136)

Nonetheless, an evaluation must fulfill the dual purpose of 1) providing accountability, and 2) improving practice.

The task, therefore, is to fulfill the purpose of evaluation and simultaneously meet the need for an evaluation which is responsive to the uniqueness and complexity of the YISD Even Start Family Literacy program. In keeping with state-of-the-art evaluation processes (Hayes, 1991; Holt, 1994; Patton, 1990; Wrigley, 1995) this report combines ethnographic methods along with more traditional data collection methods. More specifically, this report complies with the evaluation

requirements of examining 1) Project goals, 2) Activities and Services, 3) Population served, 4) Collaborative efforts, 5) Methodologies, and 6) Coordination with Chapter 1 and other programs through the analysis of qualitative data complemented by statistical and general program information data (charts, program calendars, flyers, participant records, etc). Qualitative data is included in order to capture the more subtle and complex aspects of the YISD Even Start program. The qualitative data was gathered utilizing the following ethnographic methods: 1) in-depth interviews with key staff (director, coordinator, ECED teacher, parent trainers) and parents; 2) site visits, 3) participant observations; 4) non-participant observations; and 5) program journals. An elaboration of each of these is appropriate here.

The in-depth interviews consisted of open-ended question-response-comment sessions held between the evaluator and the interviewees. (See appendix A for interview questions). All interviews were held at the site and lasted between 110 and 130 minutes each, with a total of six interviews conducted. Quality control was maintained on these interviews by closely adhering to Seidman's (1991) principles of interviewing in education and the social sciences. As an additional quality-control factor, the parents were interviewed utilizing "focus group" methodology as reported in Greene and Mulholland (1994) (See appendix B for quality control guidelines). Site visits included eight trips to the center and the surrounding complex. Participant and non-participant observations were implemented during the adult education classes, home visits,

PACT time, staff meetings, staff development; as well as during special events such as the GED graduation, and the end-of-the year celebration.

Subsequent sections in this report, therefore, will address the program goals and objectives utilizing the sources described above. Recommendations will be included throughout, as well as in the summary of the report.

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the YISD Even Start program is to develop a family-centered participatory educational program that will "...1) empower the participating parents to become full partners in the education of their children, 2) assist children in reaching their full potential as successful learners, and 3) provide ESL literacy training for the participating parents" (Schedule 4B, Proposal, p.2).

The goal of the project is to be met through the implementation of five objectives:

Objective 1:

To develop a comprehensive family centered education project that will recruit 70 families and assist them in becoming full partners in the education of their children and to develop an evaluation system which will reliably and validly demonstrate progress by program participants.

Objective 2:

To provide at least 360 hours of adult education for parents of a minimum of 70 family units by implementing a comprehensive adult education program for parents so that they can a) achieve higher levels of literacy and b) simultaneously develop parenting skills (applicable to all youngsters including ages 0-7; that will enable them to be successful partners in their children's education.

Objective 3:

To provide 36 hours of training for implementation of the PAT program to the Early Childhood Teacher who will be the advisor to the two PAT parent trainers.

Objective 4:

To implement a minimum of 15 hours of individualized home-based education to at least 60 families through 90 minute home visits utilizing the PAT parent education and school readiness program.

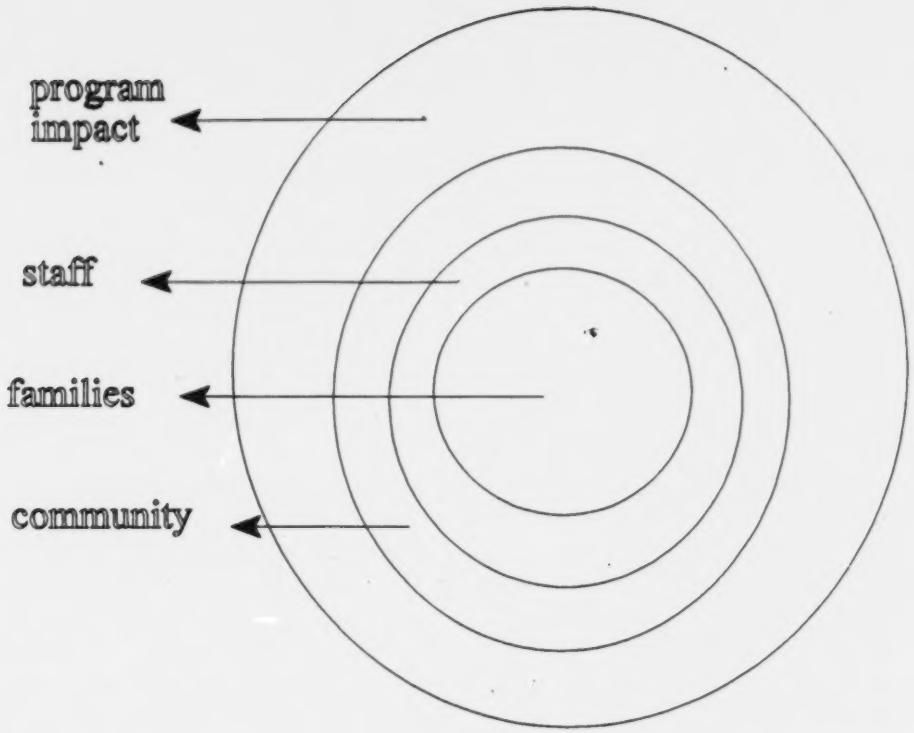
Objective 5:

To provide specialized assistance in the areas of child growth and literacy development to 70 families through a minimum of 160 hours of parent group meetings which will provide a) an opportunity to gain information from "experts" in various areas of interest to them, and b) a forum where they can discuss and share ideas, opinions, and personal experiences on the parenting skills topics/issues being presented.

Discussion of Framework

A discussion on the extent to which the project objectives have been met is presented in the following sections. This discussion follows an ethnographic type framework which allows for an examination of the objectives not as isolated components, but as interrelated parts of a whole. This framework is dynamic and consists of a set of four concentric circles. The first three circles represent the principal participating groups in the project. At the center, in the innermost circle are the families, for they are the focus and reason for the existence of the project. The following two circles represent, respectively, the staff and the community. The outermost circle represents program impact and envelopes all of the others because it embodies the overall goal of assisting families with their literacy development. This framework is reflective of a pebble of water, which when thrown into a lake produces a number of ripples. The families, being the innermost circle, are the catalysts for the production of several "ripples" or circles. Each circle is dynamic and is inextricably linked together to form the overall design whose ultimate end is the program impact (or goal) as seen in Figure 1 below.

The discussion of each component, or circle will be based on qualitative as



well as quantitative data, as appropriate, and will address the program objectives listed above.

Families

The learner experiences and outcomes with respect to the families will be discussed here. The following questions are of interest here:

"Did the program recruit the maximum number of families which it could handle?"

"Are the needs of the families being identified?"

"Are their needs being met?"

Each of the above questions is addressed in the following sections.

Families: Did the program recruit the maximum number of families?

In order to provide a comprehensive literacy program for families, a program must first recruit the participants. The program used a variety of strategies to recruit families. These included contacting residents at the mail room when they picked up their correspondence, disseminating information on the program at community meetings within the complex, passing project information through word-of-mouth, posting announcements, presentations to community agencies, targeted mailings, and handing out flyers throughout the community (see Appendix C for sample flyer).

In order to recruit as many families as possible to the project, the YISD Even Start identified three levels of participation. While families at each level participate in all of the project components, the difference is the degree to which they participate, as seen in Table 1.

Component	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
Adult Ed	13 - 16	12 - 9	9 or less	inactive
Home Visits*	10 - 12	7 - 8	6 or less	
ECED sessions	13 - 16	12 - 9	8 or less	
Parenting	3 - 4	2 - 3	1 - 2	

Table 1
Level of Participation for YISD Even Start Program

*Home visits reported on an annual basis; all other components reported monthly

This schema allows families with varying degrees of responsibilities within and outside the home to still remain active in the program and to take advantage of additional services as per their interests and time available. Inactive families are checked periodically to see if they are ready to participate. During the last fiscal year a total of 89 families were recruited to participate in the project. Objective 1 called for the recruitment of 70 families; thus, the program met and exceeded this objective. Of particular importance is that 82% (73) of these families were retained. This is very impressive given that the average retention rate in Even Start projects, as per the National Center for Family Literacy, is 30%.

COMMENDATION FOR INNOVATIVENESS AND RESPONSIVENESS TO FAMILIES IN RECRUITMENT PROCESS; FOR NUMBER OF FAMILIES RECRUITED; FOR HIGH RETENTION RATE

Families: Are the needs of the Families being identified?

A second major activity is to identify the needs of the participating families. This activity was carried out in the past year through the use of a Family Action Plan (see Appendix D). Every family that is recruited for the center is interviewed and this plan is filled out accordingly. Their educational needs and interests, as a parent and as an individual, are indicated on the form. This form also documents the resources which the family brings to the program, as well as the

the outcomes of the activities. In addition, the staff is always open to identifying and meeting additional needs as they arise during the family participation in the program. An examination of the Family Action Plans indicated that adult education and parenting skills were among the needs most frequently expressed by the families.

Identification of family needs is ongoing and conducted on an informal basis as the opportunity presents itself. The coordinator has demonstrated a firm commitment to truly "listening" to the families on a daily basis in order to meet those needs. An example is provided by Ms. Rodriguez (NOTE: pseudonyms used throughout the report). Ms. Rodriguez missed class one day. In response to a phone call from the coordinator regarding her absence, she related that she had been to the doctor and was found to have a high cholesterol level. She wasn't quite sure what this meant, but was very concerned and wanted to find out more. Other parents also expressed an interest in learning more about the causes and effects of cholesterol on their health. This prompted discussions on cholesterol during the adult ESL classes as well as the invitation of a community health worker who facilitated a parenting session on cholesterol. Additional follow-up sessions on health and nutrition were also held during the parenting sessions.

Another parent, Mr. Salas, was holding a job at a warehouse when he was recruited for Even Start. He was then earning $4.25 per hour and was anxious to earn his GED in order to get a raise. Upon participation and completion of the GED classes at the center, he received his GED. Consequently, he was promoted and

given a raise to $6.00 per hour. Anecdotes such as these illustrate but two of the many stories where specific needs were identified and met by the project with successful outcomes.

COMMENDATION ON PARTICIPATORY ASPECT OF PROGRAM

Families: Are Classes\Activities implemented meeting the needs of the Families?

A discussion of the activities that were implemented within each component to meet the needs of the families is presented in the following. A sample monthly calendar which includes the components discussed below is found in Appendix E.

Adult Education

The program has during the past year implemented adult education classes in English as a Second Language (ESL), Basic Literacy, Basic Education, Pre-General Equivalency Diploma (GED) classes, GED classes, Citizenship classes, and transition classes to college through the STEP (Success through Transition to English Program). These classes have been offered on a weekly basis both in the mornings and in the evenings. The morning and evening classes each had eight hours of contact time per week. A total of 1,376 hours of adult instruction were provided during the 1994-1995 fiscal year, thus surpassing the first objective of providing a minimum of 360 hours of adult education. There were 35 participants in the GED class, 48 in the Citizenship classes, and 10 in the STEP classes. As a result of the classes, 15 parents received their GED (one student has already

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completed three semesters of nursing school; several others have expressed interest in going beyond the GED), 5 completed and passed their citizenship test (most are still waiting to be notified of the exam date and time), and 3 parents completed the STEP program. Additionally, the participating parents received a total of 560 hours of ESL instruction.

There were, however, some concerns expressed by the parents during the focus group interview that were related to the adult education. The first concern had to do with the inadequacy of the classroom space. As many as three classes are taught simultaneously on some days (ESL, GED, STEP). These classes are taught in an open area, which is divided into three "classrooms" by chalkboard partitions, and is quite noisy. The parents feel that it is very distracting to be listening to the instructor and students "next door" and still be concentrating on their own class. The parents would like separate, quieter areas for the adult education classes.

The second area of concern involves the open-enrollment in the ESL classes. It is uncomfortable for some of the parents to be in the same class with another parent whose proficiency level in English is either quite higher or quite lower. Parents with less proficiency are often hesitant to participate in the class discussions because they feel they "don't know as much" as the other student and are not ready to take risks. Likewise, while those with more English proficiency are willing to help they too expressed frustration at the amount of time that is often spent in class trying to help newcomers catch up.

The parents would also like some more consistency with respect to the ESL instructor. They commented that at times they would have two classes taught by the coordinator, then two taught by another instructor. This is "confusing" to them and they have a hard time keeping up with the assignments because of the differences from one instructor to the next.

Nonetheless, the parents were generally quite pleased with the classes; in fact, they would like the ESL class to be offered more than twice a week and/or for a longer period of time.

RECOMMENDATION FOR REORGANIZATION THAT WOULD ALLOW FOR THE LARGEST ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES TO GO INTO AN ENCLOSED CLASSROOM AND IN TURN PLACE CHILD CARE IN ONE OF THE OPEN AREAS (AN ALTERNATIVE IS TO CREATE A SCATTERED CLASS SCHEDULE SO THAT THREE CLASSES WOULD NOT BE MEETING SIMULTANEOUSLY); FOR PARENTS THEMSELVES TO TAKE NEW STUDENTS "UNDER THEIR WING" FOR A WEEK OR TWO AND PROVIDE THE EXTRA HELP THAT WILL ALLOW THE NEW ENROLLEES TO KEEP UP WITH THE CLASS; FOR CONSISTENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE CLASS INSTRUCTOR

Parenting Sessions

Parenting sessions were also implemented on a weekly basis in two-hour blocks. These classes have provided information on parenting skills, as well as personal development. Topics, for instance, have included health classes as mentioned above, nutrition classes by Texas Tech University, presentations by the War on Drugs organization, by Child Protective Services, and by Immigration

Services. Different parenting curricula (including PADRES, the Bowdin Method, and TASB's Practical Parenting Education Series, for instance) have also been implemented as appropriate. Additional parent group meetings were implemented as the opportunity arose. Bilingual Education undergraduate students from UTEP, for example, were invited to present evening sessions to the parents on helping their children with math and science at home. Likewise, the parents attended a session on culture, dance, and music with the renowned Rosa Guerrero; as well as a session on parenting by the well known parent educator and researcher from Puerto Rico, Dr. Fonseca. Thus, the parent groups were not restricted to the two hours per week but rather were enhanced by taking advantage of every opportunity as it became available. The various activities brought the total number of hours of parenting sessions implemented during the last fiscal year to 259, thus meeting and surpassing the fifth objective of providing at least 160 hours of parent group meetings.

COMMENDATION ON THE QUALITY, QUANTITY, AND COMPREHENSIVENESS OF PARENTING SESSIONS

Home Visits

Parents also received parenting skills information for their children ages 0-3 through a series of home visits. These home visits were implemented in 90 minute blocks on a monthly basis (or more often as needed) by two parent trainers who utilized the Parents as Teachers (PAT) curriculum. This component of the

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project ran into difficulties in that appointments for the home visits were often postponed by the families who often reported conflicts with doctor's appointments or family responsibilities. Another obstacle to the implementation of this objective was that one of the parent trainers resigned in September--one month into the fiscal year. A replacement was hired in March. This caused an interruption of several months in the recruitment process and thus in home visits as well. An additional problem that surfaced towards the latter half of the year was that some of the participating families were relocated to other housing complexes. Thus, on several occasions in the summer the trainers went on home visits only to find empty apartments. Towards the end of the fiscal year, the parent trainer who has been with the program from its inception was carrying a case load of 17 families, while the "new" parent trainer was carrying a case load of 14 families. He indicated that his goal was to work towards a case load of 30 families plus a waiting list. In sum, a total of 162 home visits (243 hours total) were made to families throughout the year; each family receiving an average of 5.5 hours of contact time within the home. (Visits per family ranged anywhere from 1 to 11, depending on the time of their enrollment in the program). These outcomes fall short of the 60 families and 15 hours per family as stated in objective 4. However, this is understandable, given the circumstances.

The parents are pleased with the home visits. Some of the comments made with respect to the parent trainer and the home visits were the following: "es muy comprensiva," [she is very understanding]; "me agrada bastante" [she's very

pleasing]; "me dió hojas con información y...me ayudó" [she gave me some sheets with information and... it helped me]. Thus, the parents seem to have a good relationship with the parent trainer; they had no concerns with respect to this aspect of the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A MUCH MORE AGGRESSIVE RECRUITMENT AND HOME VISIT EFFORT THAT INCLUDES PERSONAL CALLS TO THE HOME TO INQUIRE ABOUT ANY OBSTACLES TO HOME VISITS AND TO SET UP AN ALTERNATE DATE AND TIME FOR VISIT; FOR TRAINERS AND COORDINATOR TO COLLABORATIVELY DEFINE GUIDELINES IN DEALING WITH CANCELLATIONS AND POSTPONED APPOINTMENTS

Early Childhood Education/Intergenerational Classes

Early childhood education and intergenerational classes are additional services which were offered to the families this past year. These early childhood classes were implemented with three-year olds and older children during the adult education classes four times a week. The PACT time (intergenerational classes) was implemented twice a week with 5-7 year olds. Parents attended the classes with their children during this time and worked as a family team on different make-and-take projects. A total of 165 hours of PACT classes were offered in 1994-1995.

When asked about the early childhood aspect of the program the parents were quite positive. They have good rapport with the early childhood teacher. Comments with respect to the teacher were as follows, "es muy capacitada" [she

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is very knowledgeable]; "les enseña a ser ordenados" [she teaches them to be organized]; "he visto el progreso del nino" [I have seen my child's progress]; and "no es muy docile ni muy dura" [she is neither too permissive nor too strict].

Support Services

As stated in the National Even Start guidelines, support services are a must in order that parents participate in the various activities. A minimum of two services--transportation and child care--are generally provided in comprehensive family literacy projects. The YISD Even Start has very strategically taken care of transportation by locating the family education center within the housing complex where the participants reside. Thus, transportation services are needed and have been arranged only for special events outside the complex. A bus, for instance, was rented to take the parents to UTEP on one occasion, where they attended a parenting session by the renowned Dr. Fonseca. In other instances, the parents were also taken by bus to the YISD central offices building, where they attended an end-of-the-year dinner; to a volunteer banquet, to the museum and the zoo, and to EPCC where they attended a session with Rosa Guerrero..

Child care has been offered as a support service during the adult education and parenting sessions. Two rooms have been equipped at the center for infant and toddler care. The original plans called for Early Childhood Education (ECED) student interns from EPCC to provide child care services at the site. This did not take place because a major obstacle surfaced--the site is not licensed by the state as a child care facility, whereas the requirement for ECED student internships is

that the facility where they practice must be licensed. Volunteers were, therefore, recruited for the child care services. However, it has been the case that the volunteers have not always been able to assist as needed during the adult education and parenting sessions. Thus, parents have, on occasion, not been able to attend classes or have had to keep their children with them during the classes. Thus, more consistency is needed with respect to the child care services being offered to the parents.

During the focus group interviews the parents' concerns focused on other aspects of the child care facilities. They feel that the room is often too crowded, mentioning that on some mornings there were up to fifteen children in what is a relatively small room. They suggested that the older children be separated from the younger ones and sent to a different area. They would also like to add a television and perhaps a VCR to the child care room. They feel it would be beneficial to allow the children to watch certain television programs or movies.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SETTING UP A ROTATING SCHEDULE AMONG PARENTS (INCLUDING ALTERNATES) THAT WOULD TAKE CHARGE OF CHILD CARE (A SECOND POSSIBILITY IS TO AUGMENT VOLUNTEER STAFF WITH PAID STAFF); FOR A LARGER SPACE WITHIN THE OPEN AREA OF CENTER FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Staff: Is Staff Development Adequate?

Initial and ongoing development for key staff is critical for the success of any family literacy program. This includes training for carrying out specific component duties, gaining an understanding of the project goals and objectives,

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and developing interpersonal skills in order that the staff work as a team to meet the project goal.

Personnel for the YISD Even Start have engaged in staff development at various times throughout the year.

The **coordinator** has continued to take graduate courses at New Mexico State University. Through this coursework she has learned about the various aspects of curriculum development and instruction, about ESL methodology, and about the integration of technology to instruction. The coordinator has, moreover, focused all of her research and writing for these courses on the topic of family literacy. She plans to continue her personal development by taking additional courses in the following year, including one on the administration of continuing education for adults.

In addition to the university coursework, the Even Start coordinator attended the Even Start conference in San Antonio, a Family Literacy conference in Scottsdale, the Even Start Information System and Basic Implementation Training, a workshop on the Project Forward Curriculum, and several training seminars at the site.

One of the **parent trainers** has been with the program all year and attended 40 hours of training in the PAT curriculum. Additionally, she attended several hours of literacy and team-building training which was offered at the site by an invited consultant, as well as training in CPR and in Child Protective Services. Thus, in total she received 50 hours of training in the various areas.

This trainer has expressed a desire for more training in ECED in order to more effectively implement the home visits, modify curriculum as needed, and to generally expand her knowledge base about young children. The observation of a home visit with this trainer indicated that additional training is warranted. She seems to communicate well with the parents (as per observations and parent interviews with the evaluator) However, during the home visits she was unable to focus on topics relating to child growth and development in her conversations with the parent. All discourse during the visit, with the exception of general greetings, centered around the child playing with the toy at hand. There was no elaboration, for instance, on the written information being handed to the parent regarding her child's growth, on the developmental significance of specific behaviors on the part of the child, nor on expectations with respect to physical, social, emotional or cognitive development in the ensuing weeks or months.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ADDITIONAL ON-GOING TRAINING (PERHAPS TO INCLUDE COLLEGE COURSEWORK) IN ORDER TO GAIN A BASIC FOUNDATION IN EARLY ECED

As mentioned previously, a second parent trainer was hired in March. This trainer is licensed as a social worker and has several years of experience in working with Headstart children. Moreover, he has of his own initiative made it a point to do research on any new curriculum or research developments in early childhood education. His familiarization with the Bowdin Method , for instance, was a result of his own efforts at self-development. In

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discussing his personal development this parent trainer stated that he "likes to pick up ideas...Everyday I look into something new...the more I know the more I can teach them...there's always something new you that you can learn."

The evaluator scheduled observations of home visits with this parent trainer three times; however, the parents postponed or cancelled the appointments on all three occasions. Thus, the recommendation is that he be observed next year. This will also allow him time to "settle" into the program and receive training.

COMMENDATION FOR TAKING PERSONAL INITIATIVE FOR SELF DEVELOPMENT

The key program staff also includes an **early childhood educator**. This individual is primarily responsible for the development and instruction of the early childhood curriculum (3-4 year olds) and for the implementation of PACT (parent and child together) time. The early childhood educator attended 40 hours of training on the PAT curriculum and additionally attended several training seminars at the site on the topic of team-building, parenting curriculum (including Practical Parenting), drug abuse and prevention (through Texas War on Drugs), identifying participant needs, and other topics related to the implementation of family literacy programs. She, thus, received approximately 70 hours of training.

This staff member has, additionally, several years of experience as a kindergarten teacher at Capistrano elementary school. Thus, her familiarity with the community is a strength. Nonetheless, she appeared to lack a solid conceptual base with respect to the instruction of young children and particularly of the

bilingual/bicultural children. When asked about her instructional goals during PACT time, for instance, she more than once emphasized vocabulary growth: "extend on the vocabulary of 3-4 year olds through different things...reading, dictation...exposure to different words..." When asked about the primary goal of the program with respect to the children she again emphasized vocabulary first, "To have children enter school with vocabulary ...to have an even start with others with richer environments..." There was no discussion relating to general growth and development in the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive areas.

Another indication of a need for further professional development was her lack of "classroom proficiency" in Spanish as well as her lack of understanding of the theoretical basis and need for native language development for her students. She expressed her unhappiness at having to use more Spanish in her classes than what she would like, adding that she was not a bilingual education teacher and was not familiar with stories, music or rhymes in Spanish. Her posture is one of teaching English to these children as soon as possible; a stance which clearly runs counter to the most current educational research which recommends using the native language as a medium of instruction for students who are in the process of acquiring a second language.

Another area of concern with respect to the PACT time has to do with family recruitment. At the time of the interview in the late spring, the early childhood teacher had only 4 students that were attending this component, even though 32 students had been recruited to the program through March. When

questioned on the low attendance, the teacher indicated that this was partially due to parents having other family responsibilities, and a lack of readiness on the part of the parents to participate. However, she also strongly believes that the lack of attendance is reflective of the need for the parents to "develop a sense for the importance of education" as well as "regular attendance and being on time." This staff member feels that the parents need to be motivated to attend through "rules and consequences." For example, rules might be implemented to the effect that "people that do not attend classes regularly cannot attend fun activities." She stated that she was a "disciplinarian" and has a philosophy of "punishment with consequences." This was another indication of a conflict with respect to current philosophies and methodologies regarding parent involvement which emphasize:

>flexibility rather than rigidity in working with families,

>an emphasis on strengths and potential rather than on deficits, and

>intrinsic motivation for increased participation.

Additionally, there was no indication on the part of the early childhood educator of any personal efforts (such as consistent phone calls or visits to the families) to increase the attendance levels during PACT time.

Another concern which is in part a consequence of the low attendance is that the teacher was left with large blocks of time during the day for which the teacher was left unaccountable. When asked about her activities during these large blocks of time in the morning and early afternoon (2 hours or more) before the PACT sessions she responded that she would look over the children's folders

and organize them; yet, she only had four children in PACT and approximately 6 in the early childhood morning sessions. This again begs the question as to why this time was not utilized to bolster the attendance in the early childhood sessions--or to work on any other aspect of the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A STAFF REORGANIZATION OR REPLACEMENT OF ECED TEACHER DUE TO SEVERITY OF CONCERNS; FOR A MORE AGGRESSIVE RECRUITMENT EFFORT FOR PACT AND ECED TIME, FOR COLLABORATIVE PLANNING OF TIME BETWEEN COORDINATOR AND KEY STAFF MEMBERS, FOR CLOSER MONITORING BY COORDINATOR OF KEY STAFF WITH REGARDS TO UTILIZATION OF TIME

Staff: Is the staff working together as a team to carry out program goal and objectives?

An effective family literacy program involves not only adequate staff development but also positive interpersonal relations among the staff in order for them to work as a team in meeting the program objectives. A portion of the staff development sessions implemented by a consultant were devoted to interpersonal relations and working as a team.

During site visits and observations by the evaluator, in conjunction with interview data, a lack of program cohesion was evident. Staff stated during the interviews that there seemed to be a "lack of communication" The complaint from one person was an "unawareness" of scheduled speakers and activities. When questioned about the new curriculum for home visits which will replace the PAT in the future, the same person also indicated that she did not know anything about

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it. In response to a question regarding her efforts to address this situation, however, she stated that she herself had not approached the coordinator with her concerns but instead said that she wanted to "move on" to another program.

A lack of communication with the coordinator was also cited by another staff member indicating that there were, for example, "sudden" and "unannounced" changes. In response to this concern, a wall calendar with all events for the month was posted. Obligatory weekly meetings on Fridays for the entire staff were additionally initiated in November to address this concern. Nonetheless, the early childhood teacher indicated that she was "looking for a new job." Her attitude toward the program as a whole was best exemplified when she was asked, "What are the strengths of the project?" Her response was "none".

This same issue related to communication was also addressed by the coordinator herself. She feels that there is little communication between herself and two key staff members. She further elaborated that she had "become a forced participant in the dysfunction." One of the problems the coordinator cited was the basic "philosophical differences" between herself and the same two staff members. The coordinator is a strong advocate of the "transformation" model of education, which is reflective of the most current theory and methodology in education today. The transformative model of education, as applied to family literacy, is one which 1) gives voice to the parents with respect to program design/format, 2) utilizes learner-centered curricula which meets parents' needs and interests, 3) believes that the parents possess valid forms of knowledge,

4) encourages families to act as agents of their own liberation and creators of their own destinies, and 5) keeps a focus on the family and makes it a priority to help them reach their goals and dreams. However, she feels that two staff members have not made the "paradigm shift" from a more traditional model of education to a "transformative" one as described above. While she stated that they both bring strengths to the project, such as their rapport with the families and their familiarity with the surrounding community, she also feels that some of the basic philosophical differences with respect to curriculum, instruction, and a focus on the families first and foremost are "non-negotiable" in any family literacy project especially this one.

This concern with the program staff was also discussed by the director of the project who indicated that the families had ceased to be the priority with some staff. This dysfunction has apparently increased because administrators supervising the director have opted to allow staff at the site to speak directly with them in lieu of following the regular protocol of requesting that they go through their immediate supervisors first. Thus, the team effort initiated at the inception of the project towards fulfilling the program goal has seriously eroded over the past year and must be addressed if the YISD Even Start is to have long-term success.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WRITTEN AS WELL AS ORAL COMMUNICATION OF ALL PROGRAM SERVICES/ACTIVITIES TO ALL STAFF BY COORDINATOR; FOR ADDITIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT ON TEAM BUILDING; FOR CLOSER MONITORING OF STAFF PERFORMANCE BY COORDINATOR; FOR INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS BETWEEN COORDINATOR AND KEY (FULL TIME) STAFF MEMBERS ON A MONTHLY BASIS FOR PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING THEIR PERFORMANCE AND PROVIDING FEEDBACK; FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION TO ANY MATTERS INVOLVING MISCOMMUNICATION; FOR OBSERVANCE BY ALL STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS OF CHAIN-OF-COMMAND PROCEDURES FOR VOICING GRIEVANCES

Community: Is the program reaching out to the community?

One of the key factors to a successful and comprehensive literacy project is collaboration. Programs are urged to look for and utilize existing resources within the community in order to be able to provide services which may not be otherwise possible. The YISD Even Start program has been exemplary in this regard. The program itself was a result of a collaboration with the Housing Authority of El Paso and with UTEP. These collaborations have been extended within the past year. The BECMS (Bilingual Education with a Concentration in Math and Science) project from UTEP, for instance, was brought to the site to provide a number of workshops for the parents on developing math and science concepts with their children at home. Collaboration also occurred with the STEP program from EPCC which provided instruction for those students interested in going beyond the GED in their formal education, with the ABE program from YISD which provided materials and training of instructors for the adult education classes, and with Project Forward which provided training on the ESL Curriculum for adults. As

mentioned previously, several community speakers were also brought to the site to provide a variety of workshops for the parents. Some of these, for example, were Mr. Sotelo from the Housing Authority, Rosa Guerrero from Guerrero, Inc., as well as staff from Centro San Vicente, Texas War on Drugs, Texas Tech University, and Centro Medico del Valle. Finally, collaboration has also occurred with Capistrano Elementary School and Ysleta Pre-K Center. The principals in these schools and in the outlying areas, for example, allowed children of the parents receiving their GED diploma to leave school early on the afternoon of the graduation in order to accompany their parents at the ceremony. School buses were also sent to the center on PTA nights in order to pick up parents and take them to the school. Additionally, the school nurse visited the center for screenings on a monthly basis

Resources from the community allow, in return, for service to the community. The YISD has begun to recruit families who live within the community but outside the Kennedy Housing Complex. Contact, for instance, has been made for referrals from Centro San Vicente, the WIC Division of the El Paso City County Health Department, Centro Medico del Valle, and Headstart. Plans for future outreach include recruitment of families from at least five other housing complexes.

Another aspect of community involvement involves dissemination of the project. Information on the YISD has been disseminated through visits with the collaborators mentioned above. Additionally, a presentation on the project was done at the Regional TEXTESOL (Texas affiliate of Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages) Conference, at the Texas Parent Coordinating Council for Migrant Education, at various county operated health clinics, at the Headstart Center, and for a group of graduate students at NMSU. Written coverage of the

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING THE COLLABORATION WITH CAPISTRANO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL--PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO THE ECED COMPONENT; FOR STRENGTHENING THE PROGRAM DISSEMINATION EFFORTS

program includes two articles which appeared in the El Paso Times and Herald Post, and an article in the YISD Newsletter at the time the center was inaugurated and when the first GED graduation took place. Television coverage by three local channels was also provided at the time of the inauguration and graduation. The Even Start Family Learning Center was also the focus of the Superintendent's Corner (a monthly television program) several times.

Program Impact: Has an evaluation system been developed that validly and reliably demonstrates progress by program participants?

In discussing program impact the primary question to consider is "How do

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we know?" Determination of progress by program participants hinges on a valid and reliable evaluation system. The YISD Even Start program has developed such a system. Evaluation of progress by participants has been determined through the use of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data, for instance, includes attendance records for the classes in each of the program components (adult education, parenting, early childhood), the number of home visits made to each family, the number of students who take classes beyond the GED, and the number of students who obtain a driver license. These numbers reveal with no uncertainty that positive and very concrete progress has been made by the participating families. In some families progress is evidenced simply by their good attendance record, for many of these parents had not been in a class since they were young children; and/or by the number of sessions they have had at home with the parent trainer where they are benefiting simply by virtue of participating in a one-on-one learning activity with the trainer. For others, the attainment of citizenship or GED, for instance, demonstrates a big step towards meeting their personal goals.

The evaluation system also includes qualitative data by way of observations, anecdotes, program journals, and student portfolios which are kept for every program participant. The portfolios include all of the background information on each family, The Family Action plan mentioned earlier which includes the steps taken to address the personal goals/interests listed by each parent, the Family Activity Plan which indicates the activities completed by each parent as related to

the home visits, The Home Screening Questionnaire which also provides much information as to literacy behaviors implemented in the home and student work samples from the various adult education classes. The information in the portfolios is highly valid because it represents the actual implementation of the skill or activity itself, rather than an artificial representation of the skill or activity.

Reliability has been achieved in this evaluation system through a procedure which is commonly used in qualitative research--the triangulation of data (Lincoln and Guba, 1981). That is, information has been collected from three different perspectives/sources--including the families, the instructional staff, and the coordinator--in order to insure the "trustworthiness" of the data.

Program Impact: What are some of the more complex changes that have taken place in the participating families?

Mitchell (1979) in his discussion of assessment and evaluation said, "Our knowledge is made up of the stories we can tell...where we can tell no story, we have no knowledge." (p.34). Thus, he points to the need to go beyond numbers in an evaluation and into narratives which really relate stories of how human lives have been impacted by whatever it is one is trying to evaluate.

When the coordinator was questioned about what she considered to be her main accomplishment, she described several cases which indicated that basic changes had taken place in the lives of some of the participants. Her reflections on these changes included comments such as , "Parents want to continue their education and have found a way to do it...."; "They now know that they don't

want to stop at the GED"; "The parents are sold on education"; and "...slowly but surely it's happening.". Comments from the parents during the focus group interviews revealed that changes were indeed happening. They related their personal stories as they talked about these changes. Some of their experiences and outcomes as a result of their participation in the project are described in what follows.

One parent told about how she had been feeling depressed, isolated and unhappy for a long time. One day she was contacted by one of the parent trainers who gave her a flyer on the YISD. Through this flyer she found out that, among other things, she would learn about parenting skills through the program. She joined; and as she reflected on the program she said, *"Fue mi salvación"* [it was my salvation].

Another parent, also commenting on the parenting skills which she has learned indicated that before she joined the program she was always stressed, particularly because she did not know how to cope with the challenges of raising children. Her comments as she talked about the new parenting strategies which she had learned were as follows, *"tenía un stress muy profundo...el programa me ha apoyado...yo nunca pense ántes de sentarme a la mesa a platicarles a los niños"* [I was severely stressed...the program has supported me...I never thought before of sitting down at the table and talking to my children].

Another story involves a parent with a daughter in the 8th grade. She had never before been able to assist her with her homework, particularly in math. One

day her daughter, who was studying for the TAAS (Texas statewide standardized high-stakes competency exam) test, came home asking for help on solving fractions. Her mother was, for the first time ever, able to help her because she, herself, had just finished studying fractions for her battery of GED tests. She was extremely proud and happy that she had been able to help her daughter. She exclaimed, *"...ahora me siento más al nivel de mi hija...ya no quiero ser como antes...veo otras perspectivas en la vida...y me gusta"* [I now feel more on my daughter's level...I don"t want to be as I was before...I see other perspectives in life now...and I like it].

While the success stories are too many to relate here, the following comments from other parents are indicative of their feelings about the program, the staff, and the positive changes which have taken place in their lives as a result of their participation in the YISD Even Start.

> *"Yo nunca pensé que iba agarrar el GED"* [I never thought I would get the GED]
>
> *"Nos han tratado muy bién"* [They have treated us very well]
>
> *"Nos hemos sentidos muy importantes"* [They have made us feel very important]
>
> *"Son muy comprensivas"* [They are very understanding]
>
> *"Nunca nos habían traído un programa así"* [They had never before brought us a program like this].
>
> "*Nos estimulan bastante"* [They stimulate us quite a lot]
>
> *"Nos han hecho sentir seguras de si mismas"* [They have made us feel self-confident].

"Cualquier problema que le planteamos a Susana, ella nos ayuda" [Whatever problem we come to Susana with, she always helps us]

"Nunca la vamos a tener mejor...nos cuidan a los niños" [We"re never going to have it better...they even take care of our children].

The program has had another major impact on the parents. Through its emphasis on the participatory aspects of the program, it has also succeeded in giving the families a sense of ownership of the YISD Even Start. This is evident in the way in which the parents have participated and taken responsibility for some of the functions at the center, including setting policies. The following excerpts from the program journals reveal this sense of ownership among the parents:

> "Rosario, who was battered by her husband four weeks ago and came to us for help was voted as the director of the library facility. The committee of four determined the layout of the library, and have made the rules for checking out books, have determined the hours of operation, and have generated a list of volunteers who will be working on shifts."

> "Although some of Carolina's neighbors criticize her for volunteering as opposed to getting paid, she expresses that she feels better coming to the center and doing something constructive rather than staying at home feeling depressed. Carolina, in exchange for studying ESL, will head the volunteer section of the Infant and Toddler Care Center."

> "Those students who were donating their time to offset the cost of their GED fulfilled their requirement and were told that this debt had been paid, but continued to come. Monday through Friday, from opening to closing, volunteers were in the facility taking charge. Some of the volunteers took work home in order not only to include their children but to expedite the process."

The above stories, comments, and journal entries are all evidence of success. Yet, perhaps the greatest accomplishment of the program is that, as the coordinator said, "...the parents are now advocating for themselves" Along with

their literacy and parenting skills has come an empowerment of the parents which is, in essence, the ultimate goal of the program.

This empowerment was evident in the way which the parents dealt with a letter which they all received from the Housing Authority indicating that they would be moved to another location due to an impending renovation of the entire complex. Rather than simply feeling upset and accepting this move as fate, they discussed the news during their ESL class. As the parents talked about the who, what, when, where and why of these moves, they also strategized as to their inquiries regarding this situation at an upcoming community meeting. There, they asked a series of questions including the following:

> Why are the families being moved?
>
> Why are the families being moved before their children are out of school?
>
> Has the money for the renovation actually been awarded yet? If not, why are the families being moved at this time?
>
> What will happen to Even Start? Has anyone thought about that?

The parents were told at the meeting that their questions were "not appropriate." They, nonetheless, demonstrated that they were challenging this move; that they were not going to accept being "left in the dark" about this major change to their lives; and that they were all in solidarity with one another. In brief, they demonstrated an empowerment which was not there before. This, coupled with the accomplishments mentioned in earlier sections regarding attendance and "graduations" from the various classes and parenting seminars,

provides clear indicators of program success.

COMMENDATION ON SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM WITH RESPECT TO POSITIVE AND LONG-TERM IMPACT ON THE FAMILIES; ON ACCOMPLISHMENT OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS AS WELL AS THE MORE HARD TO REACH GOALS OF INCREASING PARENT SELF-CONFIDENCE, ON PROVIDING THEM WITH A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

SUMMARY

The preceding sections have provided some background on the YISD Even Start program. Additionally, the project objectives were discussed from the perspective of three key participating groups in the program: the families, the staff, and the community. Several topics were discussed in light of the three groups, including, for example, activities implemented, support services rendered, inter-relationships among the groups, and accomplishments and concerns of all involved.

This section 1) recapitulates the discussion on the objectives (reproduced below for easy reference) and the degree to which they were met and 2) summarizes the commendations and recommendations made throughout the preceding sections. The report concludes with a brief reflection on the project and future directions.

Project Objectives

The following objectives were delineated for the 1994-1995 fiscal year:

Objective 1:

> To develop a comprehensive family centered education project that will recruit 70 families and assist them in becoming full partners in the education of their children and to develop an evaluation system which will reliably and validly demonstrate progress by program participants.

Objective 2:

> To provide at least 360 hours of adult education for parents of a minimum of 70 family units by implementing a comprehensive adult education

program for parents so that they can a) achieve higher levels of literacy and b) simultaneously develop parenting skills (applicable to all youngsters including ages 0-7) that will enable them to be successful partners in their children's education.

Objective 3:

To provide 36 hours of training for implementation of the PAT program to the Early Childhood Teacher who will be the advisor to the two PAT parent trainers.

Objective 4:

To implement a minimum of 15 hours of individualized home-based education to at least 60 families through 90 minute home visits utilizing the PAT parent education and school readiness program.

Objective 5:

To provide specialized assistant in the areas of child growth and literacy development to 70 families through a minimum of 160 hours of parent group meetings which will provide a) an opportunity to gain information from "experts" in various areas of interest to them, and b) a forum where they can discuss and share ideas, opinions, and personal experiences on the parenting skills topics/issues being presented.

With respect to the first objective, 89 families (19 more than the required 70) were recruited for the program (see Figure 2). Moreover, the retention rate of 82% was impressively high and exceeded the average retention rate of 30% for Even Start programs.

The second objective called for 360 hours of adult education. The program implemented 1,376 hours of adults education--far surpassing the number of hours called for in objective 2 (see Figure 3).

The third objective required 36 hours of training on the PAT curriculum for the ECED teacher. As discussed previously, this staff member received 70 hours

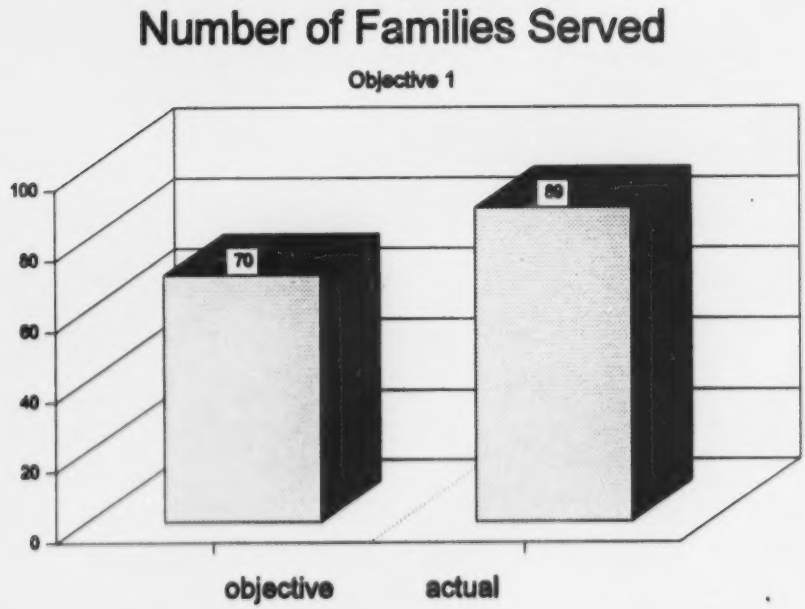
Number of Families Served
Objective 1
100
80
60
40
20
0
70
89
objective
actual

Figure 2

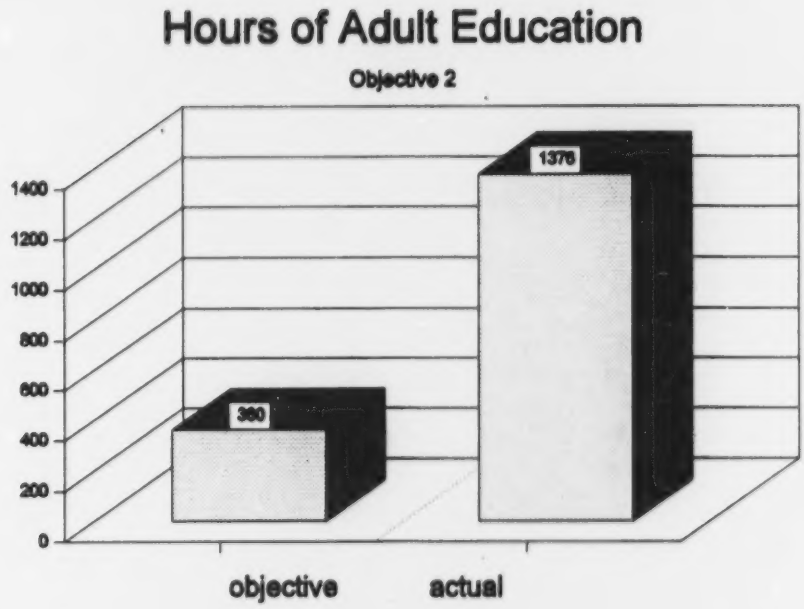
Hours of Adult Education
Objective 2
1400
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0
360
1376
objective
actual

Figure 3

of training in PAT and other areas (see Figure 4). Thus, the objective was met and surpassed.

The proposal, as per the fourth objective, required 15 hours of home visits to 60 participating families. This objective was not met, due in large part to the resignation of one of the parent trainers who left the program very early into the year. Approximately six months passed before a replacement was hired. Thus, for understandable reasons, a total of 243 hours of home visits were implemented with 44 families throughout the year. Each family received an average of 5.5 hours of contact time within the home (see Figures 5 and 6).

The fifth objective stated that 160 hours of parent group meetings were to be implemented. The program far exceeded this by providing 259 hours of parenting sessions (see Figure 7).

In brief, the program not only met but surpassed 4 of the 5 stated objectives for the 1994-1995 fiscal year. Another factor which was significant to the program's success was the high retention rate--an outstanding accomplishment for the Ysleta Even Start program (see Figure 8).

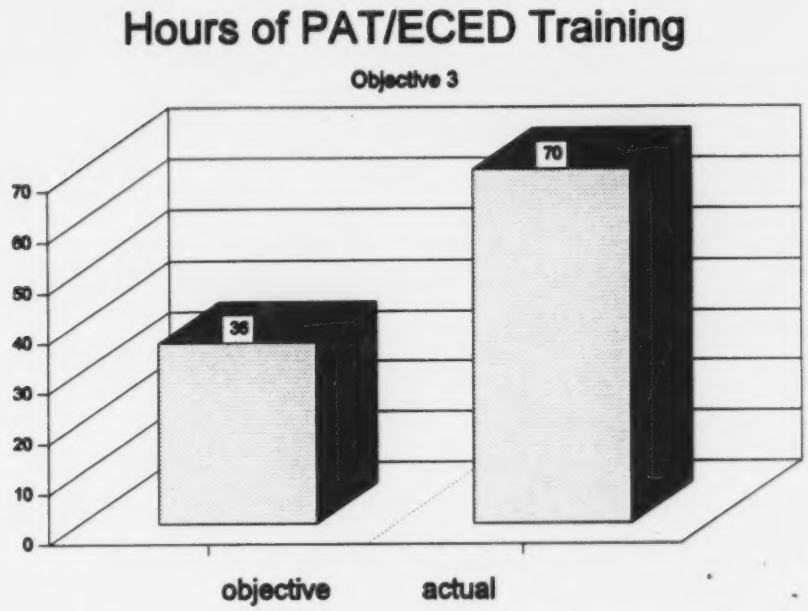
Hours of PAT/ECED Training
Objective 3
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
36
70
objective
actual

Figure 4

Number of Families Visited at Home

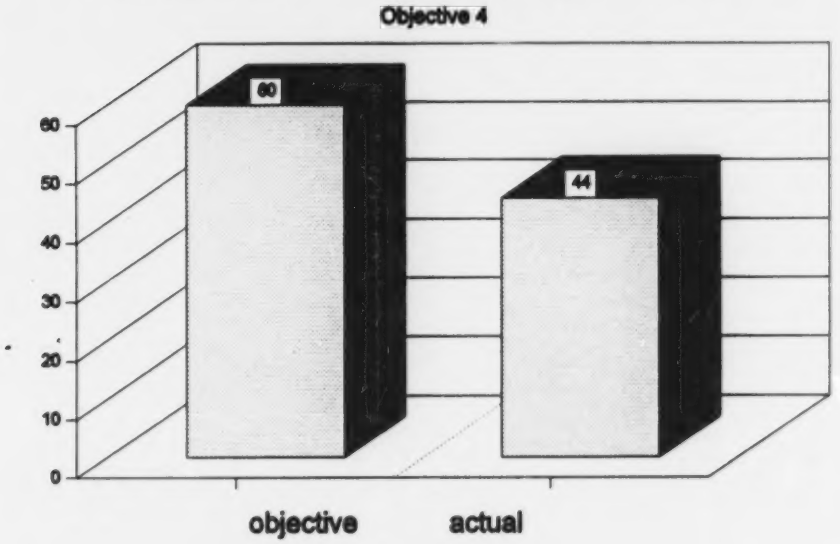

Figure 5

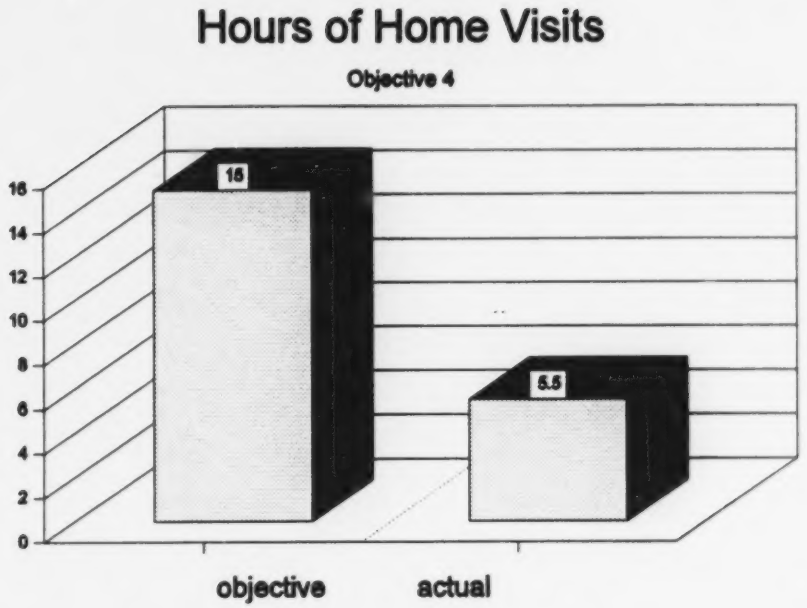
Hours of Home Visits
Objective 4
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
15
5.5
objective
actual

Figure 6

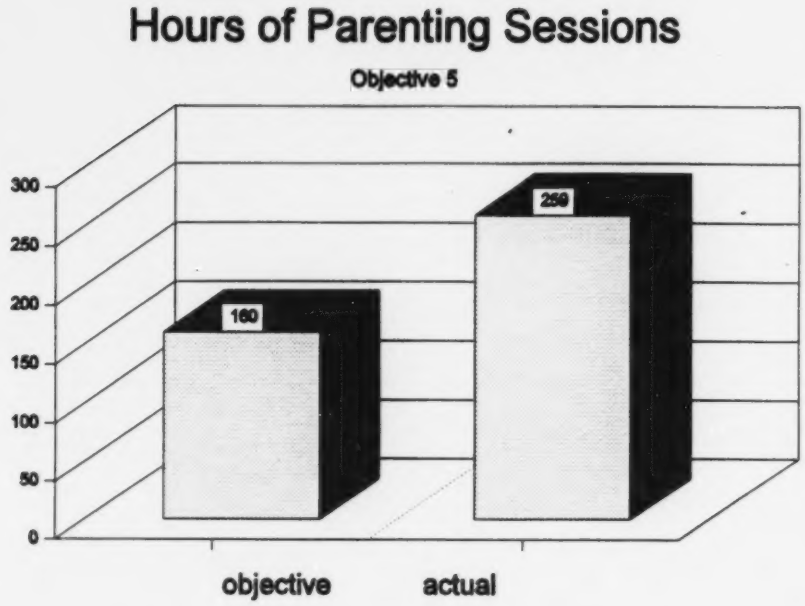
Hours of Parenting Sessions
Objective 5
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
160
259
objective
actual

Figure 7

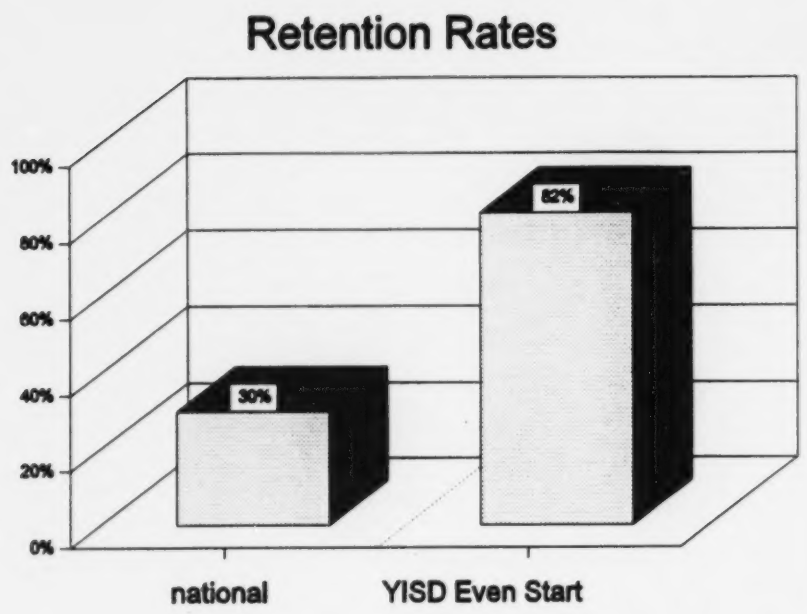
Retention Rates
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
30%
82%
national
YISD Even Start

Figure 8

Commendations

The program is to be commended for

1. **Its comprehensive design**
2. **Its responsiveness to the needs of the parents**
3. **The collaborations/linkages to the community**
4. **The attainment of 4 out of 5 objectives despite personnel difficulties**
5. **The additional accomplishments in terms of hours of service to the families which go beyond the objective requirements**
6. **The participatory process which was used in the design and implementation of the various activities.**

A brief elaboration on each of the commendations follows.

The National Center for Family Literacy describes a comprehensive project as one which includes, at minimum, adult education, home visits, intergenerational classes, and early childhood education. The YISD Even Start project provides all of this and more by also offering parenting sessions and support services for the participating families. The project is to be commended for the breadth of the services which are provided to participating families.

Collaborations and linkages with the community are critical to the success of any educational program. The Ysleta Even Start has again excelled in this area through its collaboration with two principal collaborators, the Housing Authority of El Paso, and the College of Education at UTEP; and with linkages to several other programs and organizations in the El Paso area including, to name a few,

the BECMS program from UTEP, the LEA program of El Paso Community College, Texas Tech Health Center, the Parents As Teachers National program, and the National Center for Family Literacy, There are, additionally, plans to expand and/or extend the linkages with other programs such as Headstart, WIC and Centro San Vicente. These collaborations have provided and will continue to provide the program with a support network which allows it to better serve the participating families.

The program has met 4 out of 5 of the objectives as stated in the current year proposal. The YISD Even Start, moreover, has exceeded the number of hours of service in the area of adult education. While objective 2 required 360 hours of adult education, the program has in effect provided 1,376 hours of instruction to the parents. This is a tremendous accomplishment which merits high commendation.

The program has succeeded in positively impacting the families in those areas which, although critical to success within the family, the community and the workplace, are often overlooked in program evaluations. These areas involve, for example, self-confidence, a sense of ownership with respect to program participation, the ability to advocate for oneself and one's family, pride in one's accomplishments, and aspirations for further education. The participating families have indicated--through their stories, their actions, and their comments--that they have developed all of the above to differing degrees since they began participating in Even Start. This is a major accomplishment; one which goes a long way toward

meeting the program goal of empowering the parents to become full partners in the education of their children.

Recommendations

The recommendations include

1. **A strengthening of the recruitment effort**
2. **A strengthening of the staff development efforts and/or replacement of some staff**
3. **Closer monitoring of staff by coordinator**
4. **Increased communication among staff**
5. **Increased administrative support for the director and coordinator of the program**
6. **Some reorganization of classroom areas at the center**
7. **A modified plan for infant and toddler care**
8. **Increased collaboration with Capistrano Elementary School with attention to the Chapter 1 program.**

A brief elaboration is provided below for each of the recommendations.

One of the weak areas in the program is recruitment and retention. While the staff has made several efforts to recruit and retain families, the program is not at capacity. As mentioned earlier, some of the components are weaker than others in this respect. The PACT time and the Home Visit component need greater parent participation. Follow-up phone calls and personal contacts on a regular basis are highly recommended. A major obstacle to program participation has surfaced this year--the relocation of many of the families to other housing-

complexes. Some families have been moved to nearby communities and are able to continue participating in the program. However, others have been moved as far away as Northeast El Paso, thus making it very difficult for the parents to take part in the various activities. This has, additionally, been very disheartening to the staff in that the strong efforts which they had put forth to retain families, and get them to the point where they were regular and consistent participants, have now been seriously undermined. Another compounding problem is that new families are not being brought in to replace the families being moved. The apartments are remaining vacant in hopes that the entire complex will undergo a major renovation. This is an issue which is not within the control of program staff; yet, it is one which demands strong reconsideration with respect to the organization of services and the program site. A recommendation in this area is to look at decentralizing the program services from the Kennedy's to other areas in the city. This would involve additional collaborations and teamwork; thus, the entire staff must be committed to this or any other decision that is made which involves a major reorganization.

It is this evaluator's perception that additional staff development is needed by the parent trainers. (Although one of the parent trainers may be more in need of training than the other, both will benefit from additional staff development). This should be ongoing and should include an expansion of their knowledge bases (cognitive, physical, emotional, linguistic) in children's development. An investment in this type of training, moreover, should be made only if a firm

commitment is made by the staff members to stay with the program. Replacements and/or reassignments of duties are otherwise recommended, in accordance with program needs and any reorganization that may occur.

The above perception regarding the need for additional training applies more strongly to the early childhood education teacher. However, as discussed earlier, there are additional concerns with this staff member which involve basic differences with respect to learner-centeredness, maintaining a family focus, and basic knowledge of early childhood. The preferred course of action in this case--because of the seriousness of these concerns--is a replacement. Furthermore, future hiring practices should closely consider similar family centered philosophies as one of the qualifications.

There is a need for increased monitoring of the staff by the program coordinator with respect to the utilization of time. This was particularly evident in the case of the early childhood teacher. This staff member had very few families attending the PACT/ECED components. Moreover, PACT time was not implemented on a daily basis. As such, this left large blocks of time unaccounted for--as much as three hours on some days. This time could apparently have been utilized for follow-up phone calls or community outreach, for example. However, this did not happen. The lack of communication was, no doubt, an issue here and leads to the next recommendation.

The lack of communication between the coordinator and some of the staff was previously discussed. This is a serious concern which jeopardizes the future

success of the program. As stated earlier, the recommendation is for the coordinator to hold individual as well as group meetings on a regular basis with the staff. The Friday all-staff meetings, the wall calendar, and the monthly calendar which is distributed to everyone are all steps in the right direction. An additional suggestion is for the coordinator to reflect on some of the readings in the literature on the management of successful schools, organizations, and businesses (Fullan, 1993; Senge, 1990) and apply them as appropriate to the YISD Even Start Program. Hargreaves (1995), for instance, writes about the need to "reculture" the schools and redefine the relationship between teachers and others in order that collective action and dialogue can take place within a "climate of trust"--a climate which allows dealing with complex and unanticipated problems as well as celebration of successes. O'Neil (1995), in his discussion with Peter Senge, emphasizes the need to create an environment where teachers "can continually reflect on what they are doing and learn more and more what it takes to work as teams" (p.20). An example of a suggestion that is applicable to Even Start (with some modifications) is found in the <u>One-Minute Manager</u> (Blanchard & Johnson, 1982). These authors recommend, for instance, one-minute goal settings (where staff is asked to literally take sixty seconds to look at program goals/objectives, look at their performance, and then see if the behavior matches the goals), one-minute praisings (which involve catching the staff doing something right and helping them reach their full potential by praising them); and one-minute feedbacks (where concerns are communicated by management to staff--and vice-versa--and

where staff is reminded as to how much they are valued as important contributors to meeting goals).

Just as the coordinator and the director are responsible for assisting their staff in reaching their full potential, so is the administration in assisting the director and coordinator in whatever ways possible. Two of the staff members mentioned during the interviews that they had gone to "central office" with their concerns regarding the program, apparently by-passing both the coordinator and the director. The fact that this was accepted by the administration, in itself, undermined the management/supervisory authority of the two people which were by-passed. The recommendation is that regular procedures be followed and, particularly, that the chain-of-command be observed by the administration in order to support the director and coordinator in doing their jobs as best they can. The exception to this would be extraordinary circumstances where, for instance, the coordinator and/or director were absent and there was an extremely urgent situation--a situation which has not, to date, occurred.

The open classroom areas are a concern in that the noise is an obstacle to the effectiveness of the adult education classes. Because these classes are a primary component of the program, and are well attended, the recommendation is that a reorganization of classroom space be made. If at all possible, the adult education classes should be implemented within an enclosed area. An effort should also be made to have the same instructors teach the respective classes throughout the semester.

The inconsistency in the availability of infant and toddler care calls for a modified plan for the management of this service. The evaluator recognizes that the funding guidelines prevent the hiring of paid staff for the infant and toddler care. Thus, the recommendation is that the parents themselves take ownership of this concern and design a plan that would provide consistency in the service. An additional recommendation is to look into a collaborative effort with a community agency that would assist in this area.

There appears to be little collaboration with Capistrano Elementary School, which does have school-wide Chapter 1. The principal is on the advisory committee and there was apparently some dialogue on the use of the computer lab by Even Start; however, it has stopped at that. There needs to be communication with the teachers who are working with the children in Even Start. This will assist the staff in identifying specific needs which the children or parents may have and addressing those needs in order to increase the probability of success in school. Closer communication with the staff at Capistrano will also lead to additional referrals and to participation by Even Start in any parent involvement efforts which the school may be implementing. These same types of collaborative efforts can be made with other schools as well, should the program decentralize and move into different areas of the city.

In brief, the YISD Even Start program has experienced much success during this last year of operation. However, it faces new challenges which must be addressed if it is to continue functioning in the future with the same or higher

levels of success. The potential is there; the energies, talent, and support must be harnessed in the appropriate directions.

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APPENDICES

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guides for Key Staff

Appendix B: Quality Control Guidelines for Interviews

Appendix C: Recruitment Flyer

Appendix D: Family Action Plan

Appendix E: Calendar of Events

Appendix F: Vita Brief: Dr. Ana Huerta-Macías

Appendix A
Interview Questions for Key Staff

Interview Questions

Director

1. Can you describe your role in the Ysleta Even Start Project?

2. Describe some of the activities that you have undertaken in connection with the project.

3. How much contact do you have with the children/parents & children on a daily/weekly basis?

4. What would you describe as the best part of your job?

5. What is the part that you like the least? Why? What have you done about it?

6. What would you say has been your main accomplishment as the director of the project?

7. What would you say are the strong points of the project? How has that come about? (i.e., what has made those areas successful?)

8. What do you feel are some of the areas of concern, or weaknesses with respect to the administration & implementation of the project? Are you addressing those concerns? If so, how?

9. How do you feel about the overall coordination of the program? Are you pleased? Is the program achieving its goals from your perspective?

10. How often do you visit the site? When you are there what do you perceive with respect to the families? the staff? that is, what kinds of feelings do you get regarding the activities and the overall "ambiance" that you perceive? (the social context, climate)

11. How do you feel about your own development as the Even Start Director? What areas do you feel you are strong in? What areas would you like to work on more? In what ways might you enhance the effectiveness of the project, from your role as director?

12. What are your sources of support? How do you feel with respect to this? Are you getting the assistance which you need to fulfill your role as the director of the project?

13. What are some of the strong points that you see among the Even Start staff as they each go about their duties? What are some of the weak points?

14. If you could bring about change, what would you change? What would you like to see different? In what way?

15. Where would you like to be at this point in time next year with respect to the program and its overall goal of assisting the families with their educational growth? That is what is the vision you have for the program? Anything else that you would like to comment on?

Interview Questions

Coordinator

1. Can you describe your role in the Ysleta Even Start Project?

2. What have been some of your accomplishments as coordinator of the project over the past year?

3. What would you say has been your main accomplishment as the coordinator of the project? What are you most proud of?

4. What would you describe as the best part of your job?

5. What is the part that you like the least? Why? What have you done about it?

6. What would you say are the strong points of the project? How has that come about? (i.e., what has made those areas successful?)

7. What do you feel are some of the areas of concern, or weaknesses with respect to the administration & implementation of the project?Are you addressing those concerns? If so, how?

8. How do you feel about the overall direction which the project is taking? Are you pleased? Is the program achieving its goals from your perspective?

9. What are some of the challenges that you face for the duration of the project? Or, at least, for the coming year?

10. How do you feel about your own development as the Even Start Coordinator? What areas do you feel you are strong in? What areas would you like to work on more? In what ways might you enhance the effectiveness of the project, from your role as director?

11. What are some of the strong points that you see among the Even Start staff as they each go about their duties? What are some of the weak points?

12. What are some of the strengths of the families and the contributions which they have made to the project? What are some of their needs?

13. What are your sources of support? How do you feel with respect to this? Are you getting the assistance which you need to fulfill your role as the coordinator of the project?

14. If you could bring about change, what would you change? What would you like to see different? In what way?

15. Where would you like to be at this point in time next year with respect to the program and its overall goal of assisting the families with their educational growth? That is what is the vision you have for the program? Anything else that you would like to comment on?

Interview Questions

Early Childhood Educator

1. Can you describe your role in the Ysleta Even Start Project?

2. Describe a typical day for me--what activities do you facilitate/coordinate?

3. How much contact do you have with the children/parents & children on a daily/weekly basis?

4. What would you describe as the best part of your job?

5. What is the part that you like the least? Why? What can you do about it?

6. What would you say has been your main accomplishment in your work with the participating families this year?

7. What do you feel are the principal needs of the children/parents you work with?

8. How are you striving to meet those needs? What activities/discussions are you focusing on?

9. Describe the curriculum which you are implementing in the early childhood classes/PACT components of the program.

10. Who designs the curriculum for each component? Are you comfortable with the curriculum? Upon reflection of your experiences this past year, are there any modifications you would like to make in the curriculum? If not, what makes it effective?

11. How have you addressed the linguistic/cultural needs of the non-native English speaking population that you work with here?

12. What is your assessment of any changes/growth that you have seen in the families this past year?

13. How do you feel about your own development as a parent trainer? What areas do you feel you are strong in? What areas would you like to work on more?

14. From your perspective, what are the strengths of the Ysleta Even Start Project? What are the weaknesses and how can we address them?

15. Where would you like to be at this time next year with respect to the program and its overall goal of assisting the families with their educational growth?

Interview Questions

Parent Trainers

1. Can you describe your role in the Ysleta Even Start Project?

2. Describe a typical day/home visit for me--what activities do you facilitate/coordinate? What do you do during a home visit?

3. About how many families do you visit on a weekly, monthly basis?

4. What would you describe as the best part of your job?

5. What is the part that you like the least? Why? What are you doing to address this?

6. What would you say has been your main accomplishment in your work with the participating families this year?

7. What do you feel are the principal needs of the families you work with?

8. How are you striving to meet those needs? What activities/discussions are you focusing on?

9. How do feel about the PAT curriculum with respect to effectiveness, ease of use, and training for use?

10. Are you comfortable with the curriculum? Any changes you would like to see in this area?

11. What is your assessment of any changes/growth that you have seen in the families this past year?

12. How do you feel about your own development as a parent trainer? What areas do you feel you are strong in? What areas would you like to work on more?

13. From your perspective, what are the strengths of the Ysleta Even Start Project? What are the weaknesses?

14. How can we address the weaknesses and improve the program?

15. Where would you like to be at this time next year with respect to the program and its overall goal of assisting the families with their educational growth? Any other comments or questions which you would like to make?

Interview Questions

Parent Group

1. ¿Qué es lo que las atrayó al proyecto? Es decir, cómo es que uds. llegaron a ser participantes en Even Start?

2. ¿Cuales son sus sentimientos, sus actitudes en cuanto a su participación en el proyecto? ¿Cómo se sienten referente a su participación?

3. ¿Qué impresiones les ha dado el proyecto? Es decir, ¿Qué les parece en cuanto a las actividades que se han desarrollado, los servicios que les ofrecen, las instalaciones aquí, etc.?

4. ¿Les ha ayudado a uds. o a sus familias el proyecto? ¿De qué manera? Amplien con un ejemplo, por favor.

5. ¿Qué es lo que más les gusta a uds. del proyecto? Y, al contrario, ¿Qué es lo que más les ha disgustado? ¿Hay alguna cosa que les a disgustado mucho?

6. ¿Han cambiado sus vidas, en cualquier aspecto, a causa del proyecto? ¿En que manera? Puede ser algo mayor, o algún cambio más pequeño que les a afectado a uds. o a sus familias.

7. ¿Algunas de uds. han recibido visitas de los entrenadores, Pilar o Martin, en sus hogares? ¿Qué les parecen esas visitas? ¿Les han ayudadó? ¿Les gustan? Si no se han llevado a cabo en su hogar ¿por qué razón? ¿Hay algún problema? ¿Algo que no les gusta? ¿Algo que no les parece bien?

8. ¿Cómo se sienten en cuanto a las relaciones que hay entre uds. y los instructores, la coordinadora, la directora, y todo el personal del proyecto? ¿Qué tan seguido tienen comunicación con el personal? Sienten uds. que pueden hablar a cualquier hora, con confianza, si tienen alguna pregunta, algún problema? ¿Estan abiertas las vias de comunicación?

9. ¿Cuales son sus impresiones que uds. tienen del personal en cuanto a la preparación, el entrenamiento que tienen para desempeñar sus papeles en el proyecto--por ejemplo, las visitas en los hogares, los instructores de inglés, de GED, de la enseñanza temprana de los niños, etc.

10. ¿Se han comunicado con el personal de la escuela de sus hijos acerca de Even Start? ¿Hay comunicación entre la maestra de la enseñanza temprana, por ejemplo, con las maestras del kinder o pre-kinder de Capistrano? ¿Les gustaría que hubiera esa comunicación? ¿Cren que es necesario o no?

11. Si uds. pudieran llevar a cabo un cambio en el proyecto, ¿Qué seria? Si pudieran, como con una varita magica, cambiar alguna cosa, ¿Qué cambio(s) harían?

12. ¿Qué les ha sido de más beneficio para uds. del proyecto? ¿Qué ha sido de menos beneficio?

13. ¿Piensan seguir con el proyecto? ¿Por qué o por qué no?

14. ¿Se han desarrollado uds. en algún aspecto, a través de su participación en el proyecto...ya sea, personal, intelectual, ...? ¿Cuál ha sido su mayor logro durante su participación en el proyecto?

15. Piensen en el futuro. ¿Cómo les gustaría ver al proyecto de aquí a un año? Es decir, ¿Cómo les gustaría que se mejorara, o se desarrollara más el proyecto? ¿Cuáles actividades, que tipo de organización, etc. les gustaría encontrar en el Even Start el año proximo? ¿Hay algunos otros comentarios que desean hacer?

Appendix B
Quality Control Guidelines for Interviews

Interview Guidelines

Seidman's (1991) principles for in-depth interviewing were followed in order to maintain a high quality control on the interviews. Specifically, attention was paid to the following, in accordance with the principles expressed in Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences:

✓Listen more, talk less
✓Follow up on what the participant says
✓Ask questions when you do not understand
✓Ask to hear more about a subject
✓Explore, don't probe
✓Avoid leading questions
✓Ask open-ended questions
✓Follow up, don't interrupt
✓Keep participants focused and ask for concrete details
✓Explore laughter
✓Tolerate silence
✓Use an interview guide cautiously

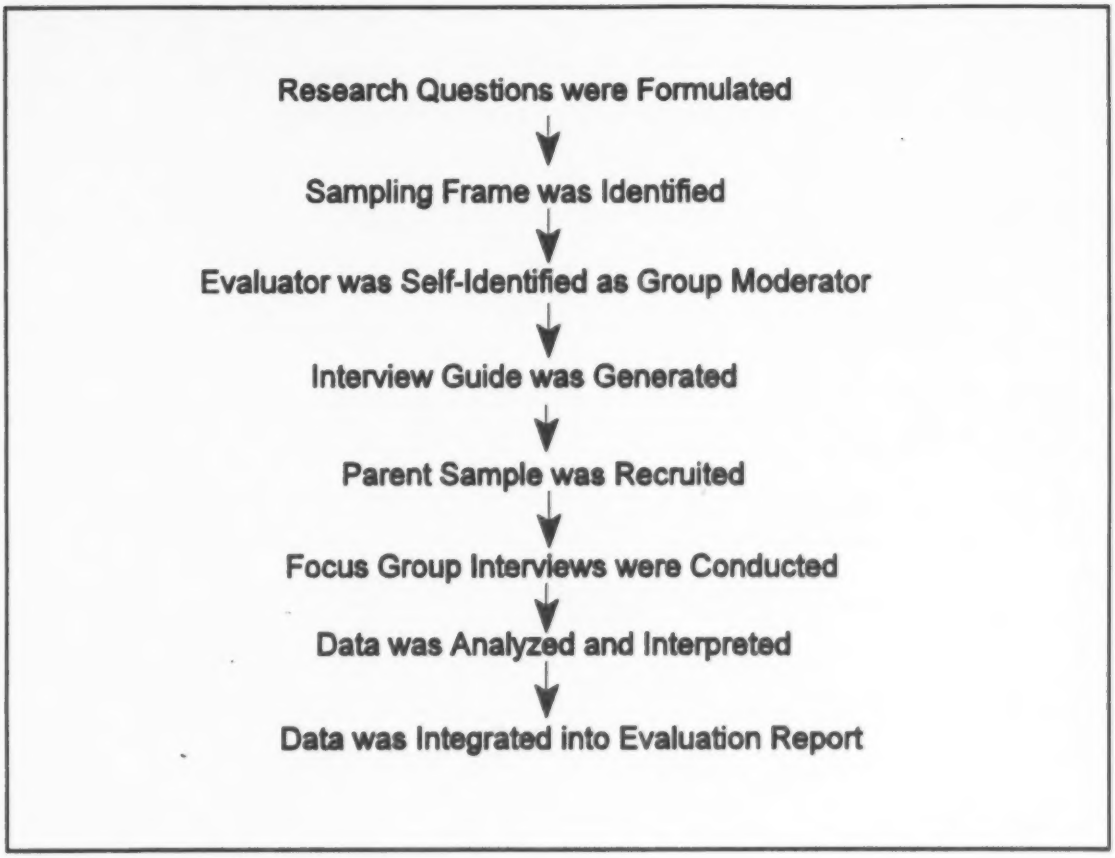
Interview Format

The evaluator conducted an in-depth, open-ended, and informal interview with each person on the staff including the director, coordinator, early childhood educator, and two parent trainers. Each interview lasted approximately 110 to 120 minutes. The interviews were audiotaped in order to allow the evaluator to pay closer attention to what the interviewees were saying and to be able to follow up on their comments with appropriate questions. A list of 15 questions was prepared to serve as a guide for each interview. The interviews were conversational in nature; interviewees were free to ask questions, elaborate, clarify, emphasize as much or as little as they wished. Before ending the interview all interviewees were given one more opportunity to comment on anything they wished, whether it had or had not been addressed in the questions.

Focus Group Interviews

Quality control was maintained by following the basic principles of naturalistic inquiry through focus group interviews as described in the literature, and specifically in Green and Mulholland (1994).

The following procedures were implemented in the design of the interviews:


Research Questions were Formulated
Sampling Frame was Identified
Evaluator was Self-Identified as Group Moderator
Interview Guide was Generated
Parent Sample was Recruited
Focus Group Interviews were Conducted
Data was Analyzed and Interpreted
Data was Integrated into Evaluation Report

Appendix C
Program Recruitment Flyer

EVEN START PROGRAM
KENNEDY FAMILY LEARNING CENTER
447 S. SCHUTZ
EL PASO, TEXAS 79907
(915) 860-0629

If you know of adults wanting to work on their GED, learn to read or enroll in **English as a Second langunge** classes, or **Citizenship** classes, and have at least **one child between 0-7 years** of age, please refer them to our office. For more information call our staff at **860-0629.**

Eligibility Requirements: (1.) Parent or Adult must need Adult Education such as **GED, ESL or Citizenship** classes.

(2.) Have a child between the ages of 0-7 years. To include **pregnant women.**

Conoce usted a un adulto que quiera asistir a classes de GED, Aprender a leer o tomar classes de **Ingles**, classes de **Ciudadania**, Y por lo menos tiene un nino de **0-7 anos** de edad. Si conoce a alguien favor de comunicarse con nuestra oficina al numero **860-0629** y hable con nuestros redatores.

Requisitos de Elegibilidad: (1.) Que los Padres o Adultos de familias esten en necesidad de Educacion como **GED, Classes de Ingles, Classes de Cuidadanio.**

(2.) Tener un nino(a) de 0-7 anos de edad, tambien si es una mujer embarazada.

Appendix D
Family Action Plan

FAMILY ACTION PLAN

Adapted from a form developed by the Portage Project

Family Action Plan
Family Interests

_____ Child Development

_____ Health Check-ups

_____ Emergency Food

_____ Aid to Dependent Children

_____ Children with Special Needs

_____ Finding a Job

_____ Depression

_____ Hobbies

_____ Emergency Housing

_____ Fuel Assistance

_____ Alcohol/Drug Abuse

_____ Dieting

_____ Family Planning

_____ General Education Degree

_____ Fatigue

_____ Fire Safety

_____ Family Counseling

_____ Dental Care

_____ Spouse Abuse

_____ Anger/Hostility

_____ Supplemental Security Income

_____ Child Care

_____ Child Management

_____ Exercise/Physical Fitness

_____ Budgeting

_____ Nutrition for Preschoolers

_____ Immunizations

_____ Driver's License

_____ Emergency Clothing

_____ Women, Infants and Children

_____ Improved Reading Skills

_____ Churches

_____ Marriage Counseling

_____ Job Training

_____ Meal Planning and Preparation

_____ Child Abuse and Neglect

_____ Volunteering/Community Involvement

_____ Household Safety and Sanitation

_____ Home Weatherization

_____ Other

FAMILY ACTION PLAN

Family's Interests/Needs	Priority	Date Initiated	Date Completed

FAMILY ACTION PLAN

Plan of Action

Objective _____

Family Resources:

Date Started	Steps	Who	Outcomes	Date Completed

Agencies Involved

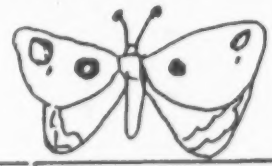
Name	Agency	Address	Phone

Appendix E
Calendar of Program Events

"April Showers"

EVEN START CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 1995

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
*A CHILD IS A BUTTERFLY IN THE WIND: SOME CAN FLY HIGHER THEN OTHERS: BUT EACH ONE FLIES THE BEST THAT IT CAN. EACH ONE IS DIFFERENT, SPECIAL, BEAUTIFUL.						
2	3 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m.	4 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m. * Becms presentation 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.	5 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m.	6 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m.	7 Staff Development 8:00-12:00 Parent & Staff Meeting 1:00 p.m.	8 La frase "te lo he dicho mil veces" destruye en el nino la confianza en si mismo.
9	10 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m.	11 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m.	12 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m.	13 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m.	14 Good Friday Holiday Even Start Office Closed	15
16 HAPPY EASTER !!	17 School Holiday Even Start Office Closed	18 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m. * Becms 5-7 p.m. Rosa Guerrero EPCC 10:30 a.m.	19 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m. Staff Meeting 5:30 p.m. *Mary Benavides CSA 9:30 a.m.	20 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m.	21 Staff Development 8:00-12:00	22
23 /30 91	24 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m.	25 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m. * Becms 5:00-7:00 p.m.	26 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m.	27 Adult Ed. Classes 9:00-11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00 p.m. + Group session for parents 1:00 p.m.	28 Staff Development 8:00-12:00 * BBOMS Conference UTEP	29 *BBOMS CONFERNCE UTEP

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* Bilingual Education with a Concentration in Math & Science

\+ Parent Group Presentor

Adult Ed. Classes consist of GED,

PACT (Parent and Child Together) Time 11:00-11:45 a.m.
Monday thru Thursday
2:45-3:30 p.m.
Monday and Thursday
Ms. Susie's class

Appendix F: Vita Brief

Vita Brief for Ana Huerta-Macias

Academic Preparation

Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin, 1978, Foreign Language Education
M.A. University of Texas at Austin, 1975, Foreign Language Education
B.A. University of Texas at El Paso, 1973, Linguistics

Professional Experience

Dr. Huerta-Macías has held a series of positions in the areas of ESL instruction, family literacy, and bilingual education. Currently Dr. Huerta-Macías is a faculty member in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at New Mexico State University where she is responsible for coordination of the TESOL program.

Consultantships

Dr. Huerta-Macías has served as a consultant author for Macmillan/McGraw-Hill with responsibility for the parent-involvement component of the Write Ideal textbook series. She has also served as a consultant for the Home Education Livelihood Program Summer Migrant Program in New Mexico, the El Paso Independent School District, the Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, the Ysleta Independent School District, and for the National Workplace Literacy Project.

Professional Presentations

Dr. Huerta-Macías has done over 30 professional presentations at local, regional, national and international conferences. Her most recent presentations have been at the CIEF (Consorcio de Educacíon Fronteriza) International Conference, and at the ENCUENTRO International Conference on Culture.

Publications

Dr. Huerta-Macías' publications include over 25 articles in the areas of bilingualism, ESL, bilingual education, parent involvement and family literacy in a variety of professional journals and books including, for example, Association for Childhood Education International, Immigrant Learners and Their Families, The Family/Community Journal, The Reading Teacher, The NABE Journal, Literacy and Biliteracy for Spanish-Speaking Children, International Journal of Chicano Studies, Early Childhood Education from a Bilingual Perspective, Latino Language and Communicative Behavior, Language and Speech in American Society, and Readings in Spanish-English Contrastive Linguistics. She has most recently co-edited a book on quality schooling practices for Latino students. Currently, she is co-editing a special themed issue on parent involvement for the The Journal of Educational Issues for Language Minority Students.